



Lauding the Iowa Court Ruling Granting Same-Sex Couples Freedom to Marry

By **National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Action Fund Executive Director Rea Carey**
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This is a momentous decision for equality thanks to the Iowa Supreme Court's unanimous ruling in *Varnum v. Brien* granting the freedom to marry to same-sex couples.

This ruling marks another watershed moment in the struggle for full equality. No longer will same-sex couples have their relationships treated as less than equal by the state. The court rightly affirmed that no loving committed couple should be denied marriage and the critical protections only marriage can provide.

This ruling also affirms our common humanity by providing same-sex couples with the opportunity to participate in the shared hopes and dreams of making a public commitment to the person they love. We are thrilled that equality has come to Iowa!

Actually, Iowa has a long track record of being a leader in supporting equality. As noted in a joint statement from Iowa Senate Majority Leader Mike Gronstal and Iowa House Speaker Pat Murphy lauding today's decision, the Iowa Supreme Court ruled in 1868 that racially segregated "separate but equal" schools had no place in Iowa — 85 years before the U.S. Supreme Court reached the same decision; in 1873, the court ruled against racial discrimination in public accommodations — 91 years before the U.S. Supreme Court reached the same decision; and in 1869, Iowa became the first state in the union to admit women to the practice of law.

Iowa extended that proud tradition.

And here at the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, we're proud to have been a signatory to an amicus brief supporting the marriage equality position. Additionally, Task Force organizers were recently sent to Iowa where they worked with One Iowa's field staff to grow the group's volunteer base that was active with One Iowa's legislative advocacy in support of the freedom to marry.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to the plaintiffs and groups that made today's victory possible, especially to Lambda Legal for serving as lead legal counsel, and One Iowa for its statewide public education and advocacy to promote the freedom to marry.

We know that fair-minded Iowans — and fair-minded people across the country — will be celebrating with us in response to the decision.